



The City of Morgantown

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City Works with WVU to Address Weekend Rioting

Both institutions looking to the future to holistically prevent unlawful behavior

MORGANTOWN – City Administration would like to extend its gratitude to our police, fire and Public Works staff for their valor in the face of overwhelming odds – roughly 50 responders against a group 5,000 rioters Saturday night – as well as West Virginia State Police, the Monongalia County Sheriff's Dept. and university police officers, who helped us throughout the riots.

We are incredibly thankful that no one from these agencies was seriously injured by rioters, some of whom threw objects including softball-sized rocks and rolled flaming dumpsters downhill at first responders.

"I am proud of our police, fire and Public Works employees, and on the way they responded in a professional manner throughout Saturday night and Sunday morning that eliminated serious injuries," said city manager Jeff Mikorski.

On Monday, City officials met with West Virginia University staff, student leaders and administration to discuss the incidences that occurred, how to move forward in a holistic manner to address the lawless behavior of students, city residents and fans, and to ensure we prevent similar situations in the short term as well as in the long run. The City proposed several avenues through which to accomplish these goals, and we hope the university will partner with us to implement them:

First, both the City and WVU will help lead a cultural change among students and fans who have not demonstrated the core values of the university or the state of West Virginia. This includes implementation of a Zero Tolerance Policy on WVU's behalf for arson and violent acts, particularly against first responders.

Second, we proposed the development of a Joint Operations Center that would include WVU, Morgantown police, State Police, the Department of Homeland Security and the

West Virginia Department of Military Affairs and Public Safety. The proposed center would monitor social media and pursue those who are openly inciting riots and arson.

Third, we discussed the possibility of implementing a university impact fee for all students to be used to expand the resources of Morgantown Police and Fire Departments to better manage potential groups of 5,000 –10,000 rioters and common disturbances on weekends and holidays like St. Patrick's Day.

Last, we plan to ask our legislators for support to help make arson of dumpsters a felony. Morgantown has been the number one city in the nation for malicious burning, and this must change.

Morgantown includes a wonderful variety of residents, students, international guests and short-term visitors, and we strive to protect everyone here. However, it is also the responsibility of this diverse group to assist in keeping the community a place of dignity, responsibility and prosperity. We recognize those students and fans who celebrated WVU's victory over Baylor responsibly, and we thank you for setting a positive example for others.

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